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Islamic Education in the Vortex of Local Politics: An Ethnomethodological Analysis of the Negotiation of Power, Accountability and Sustainable Governance

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ABSTRACT

The dynamics of political decentralization in Indonesia have placed Islamic educational institutions, particularly pesantren and madrasahs, at the intersection between the pressures of local political hegemony and the imperative to preserve religious pedagogical integrity. This study aims to uncover, from a micro-sociological perspective, how administrators of Islamic educational institutions reason, negotiate, and adapt to local political pressures in their everyday practices in order to sustain institutional continuity and educational quality. Employing a qualitative approach within the ethnomethodological tradition, this study analyzes accounting practices, indexicality, and the reflexivity of social action.The findings reveal three main ethnomethodological adaptation strategies: indexical moral neutralization, namely the framing of electoral political interactions as prophetic silaturahmi and the fulfillment of a public welfare mandate (maslahah) to mitigate patron-client tensions; tiered curricular pragmatism, namely the separation between formal administrative accountability to the state and religious knowledge transmission based on sanad within the boarding-school environment; and internal ecosystem-based economic resilience, namely the strengthening of institutional entrepreneurship to mitigate co-optation through politically motivated local government grants. Theoretically, this study extends the discourse on the sociology of Islamic education by arguing that political adaptation is not merely a form of passive compliance or opportunistic pragmatism, but rather a construction of a rational social order produced by institutional actors to preserve organizational autonomy. These findings offer strategic policy implications for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Keywords: Islamic Education; Local Politics; Ethnomethodology; Institutional Autonomy

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INTRODUCTION

Political decentralisation following the 1998 Reform Movement has altered the configuration of relations between the state, society and religious institutions in Indonesia (Mof, Y., Ramadan, W., 2026). The devolution of some governmental powers to the local level not only creates scope for more context-specific policy-making, but also broadens the arena for interaction between local political interests and socio-religious institutions (Syawaludin et al., 2026). In the context of Islamic education, these changes are significant because pesantren and madrasahs not only serve as venues for the transmission of religious knowledge, but also hold a strong social position in shaping authority, community networks and social legitimacy at the local level (Rahmatunnisa, 2014). A study on the decentralisation of Islamic education shows that changes to the governance framework since 1999 have given local authorities greater scope to adapt education policies to the local socio-religious context, whilst at the same time raising

issues regarding the coordination of powers and governance between local authorities and Islamic educational institutions (Annisa & Madjid, 2025).

The significant social standing of pesantren demonstrates that these institutions are key players in the dynamics of local communities. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Education Management Information System (EMIS) in July 2024 recorded 41,286 pesantren, with 3,339,536 students and 284,662 teachers and educational staff in Indonesia. Pesantren also provide various forms of educational services, ranging from formal diniyah education, muadalah educational units, Ma'had Aly, equivalency education, to Qur'anic education. Given these figures, pesantren cannot be regarded as educational institutions operating outside the socio-political dynamics. (Kemenag, 2025). Conversely, the broad social base of pesantren means that the relationship between religious authorities, public resources, the community and local authorities is one of the key issues in understanding the governance of contemporary Islamic education (Ali Nasith, Asnawan, Mohtazul Farid, 2025).

The intersection between Islamic educational institutions and local politics is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of electoral politics. The 2024 simultaneous regional head elections will be held in 545 regions, comprising 37 provinces, 415 regencies and 93 cities. The scale of this contest highlights the breadth of the local political arena in which government actors, political parties, religious figures, civil society organisations and the education sector interact (Muhammad Ridho Hidayatullah, 2024). In this context, a number of studies have shown that Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and religious leaders (kiai) play a significant role in electoral politics. Makhasin, for example, demonstrates that Islamic organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama face a dilemma between patronage, piety and electoral competition in local elections in Brebes. Chalik also demonstrates that pesantren-based local elites can wield visible power, hidden power and invisible power in the contest for the regional head election in East Java (Makhasin, 2025).

Kanthi Pamungkas's research shows that the relationship between kiai and santri in East Java's electoral politics can be understood through a patron-client dynamic, particularly as kiai hold strong authority within pesantren culture. However, other studies indicate that this relationship is not always uniform. A study of political culture at the API and Pabelan pesantren in Magelang, for example, found differences between patterns of obedience and patronage and more open and rational political patterns (Kanthi Pamungkas Sari, 2016). This finding is significant because it shows that the pesantren community cannot be understood as a homogeneous political group. Political orientations and responses to those in power may vary depending on the leadership structure, institutional culture and social context of each individual pesantren.

Recent research developments are increasingly highlighting the complexity of these relationships. Research on the 2024 Cirebon City Regional Elections found a patron-client relationship between candidates, religious leaders (kiai) and the community in the pesantren area through personal connections, loyalty and the exchange of interests. Meanwhile, research on the As'adiyah Pesantren in Wajo revealed a relationship between the pesantren, its alumni, political parties, religious activities, as well as financial and infrastructural support in fostering local political communication. Indeed, more recent research on santri communities in the 2024 local elections in Jombang and Mojokerto indicates that political support from the pesantren community is dynamic and contextual, and is not determined solely by charisma or religious lineage (Makhasin, 2025).

Nevertheless, these studies generally still view pesantren and religious actors primarily as political actors, bases for mobilisation, patronage networks, or sources of electoral capital. Research has largely focused on how kiai secure support, how santri are mobilised, how candidates build networks with pesantren, or how patronage operates within political contests. Whilst this perspective is important for explaining power structures at the macro and meso levels, it does not fully account for what occurs in the day-to-day practices of educational institutions when their administrators must navigate local political interests.

This issue has become increasingly significant as Islamic educational institutions simultaneously face regulatory demands, administrative accountability, requirements for

educational quality, and the need to maintain their institutional identity and autonomy. A study on the politics of Islamic education at the Darush Sholihin 2 pesantren shows that the pesantren's educational policies are shaped by the interplay between national regulations, demands for standardisation and accreditation, pesantren traditions, and the expectations of the local community. More recent research on the transformation of Islamic education policy also indicates that the institutional strengthening of pesantren faces challenges relating to legal recognition, quality assurance, graduate certification, governance, and compliance with national regulations, whilst pesantren are still required to maintain their autonomy and scholarly traditions.

Thus, the central issue of this research is not merely whether Islamic educational institutions are involved in local politics, but rather how the actors within these institutions understand, interpret and manage their relationships with political power in their day-to-day practices. When the head of a pesantren receives a visit from a political candidate, when the institution receives support from the local government, when the leadership must comply with state administrative requirements, or when religious activities intersect with electoral interests, such actions cannot always be explained solely through the categories of 'compliant', 'co-opted' or 'pragmatic'. Within these practices lie processes of reasoning, meaning-making, linguistic framing, and the negotiation of boundaries between educational and political interests.

It is at this point that this study draws upon Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodological perspective. Ethnomethodology enables research to move from an analysis of power structures towards micro-processes concerning how actors produce social order through practical reasoning in everyday life. The concept of 'accounting practices' is used to examine how managers explain and make their actions comprehensible; the concept of 'indexicality' is used to analyse how the meaning of an action depends on the context of interaction; whilst 'reflexivity' is used to understand how actors' actions simultaneously shape and maintain institutional order. This approach is relevant because the research does not assume from the outset that political interaction constitutes either co-optation or resistance, but rather traces how such meanings and strategies are produced by actors in concrete situations.

Based on this review, there is a critical research gap that needs to be addressed. Previous research has provided important insights into political patronage, the role of kiai, the mobilisation of santri, the pesantren elite, and the relationship between pesantren and political candidates and parties. However, the microsociological dimensions—namely, how the administrators of Islamic educational institutions engage in everyday sense-making when faced with local political pressures, how they establish accountability for such actions, and how these strategies impact the governance and sustainability of the institutions—have received relatively little attention. Indeed, even the most recent studies on the political authority of kiai indicate that the issue of the impact of political involvement on the structure, quality, and governance of pesantren still requires further attention.

In light of this gap, this study offers three aspects of novelty. Firstly, this study shifts the unit of analysis from the political elite and electoral mobilisation towards the everyday practices of the administrators of Islamic educational institutions. Secondly, this study employs ethnomethodology to uncover the mechanisms of practical reasoning that enable actors to negotiate the relationship between political demands, institutional accountability and religious values. Thirdly, this study links this negotiation process to sustainable educational governance and institutional autonomy, such that political adaptation is not simply framed as compliance or opportunism, but as an empirical phenomenon that must be demonstrated through the social practices of the actors. From this perspective, this study proceeds from the argument that the relationship between Islamic educational institutions and local politics does not unfold in a linear manner between power and compliance. Between the two lies a space for negotiation that enables administrators to reframe political interactions, set administrative and pedagogical boundaries, and develop institutional strategies to ensure the organisation's sustainability. Consequently, this study aims to analyse how the administrators of Islamic educational institutions reason, negotiate and adapt to local political dynamics through practices of accountability, indexicality and reflexivity in their day-to-day institutional life. This perspective

also lends broader relevance to the sustainable development agenda. SDG 4 emphasises inclusive, equitable and high-quality education, whilst SDG 16 emphasises effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. Consequently, the sustainability of Islamic educational institutions is not only linked to their ability to maintain the organisation's existence, but also to their capacity to uphold the quality of education, managerial accountability and institutional autonomy amidst shifts in the local power structure.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, drawing on Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodological tradition, to understand how the administrators of Islamic educational institutions reason, interpret and negotiate local political dynamics within their day-to-day institutional practices (Sugiyono, 2014). The analysis focuses on accounting practices, indexicality and the reflexivity of actions in maintaining the autonomy and sustainability of institutions. The research was conducted within a network of pesantren and madrasahs in Central Java and East Java (Annurria & Mais, 2022). Informants were selected through purposive sampling on the basis of their direct involvement in the management of the institutions and their interactions with local power structures. There were 10 informants in total, comprising pesantren supervisors, madrasah administrators, foundation trustees, female pesantren leaders, financial managers, officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), and community leaders.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, naturalistic observation and a documentary study. Interviews were used to explore the informants' experiences and practical reasoning in dealing with political interactions, educational regulations and the management of institutional resources. Observations were made of interaction and decision-making practices within the institutional environment, whilst documentation was used to examine policy documents, curricula, institutional support and administrative matters relating to educational governance. Data analysis was carried out interactively through data condensation, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions, adapting the model proposed by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña. Interview data were transcribed and coded to identify forms of accounting practices, indexical expressions, patterns of common-sense reasoning, and the reflexivity of actions (Miles, 2014). Subsequently, these patterns were reconstructed to explain the mechanisms by which Islamic educational institutions adapted to local political pressures (Lexi J. Meleong, 2004). Data validity is ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, prolonged engagement, and member checking. Triangulation is carried out by comparing information from various informants and data collection methods, whilst member checking is used to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is consistent with the informants' experiences and the context they intended.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Moral Neutralisation in Islamic Educational Practice: Local Political Negotiations and Symbolic Accountability

Interactions between Islamic educational institutions and local political actors do not always take the form of overt political support. Based on interviews and observations of informants, pesantren leaders and the administrators of Islamic educational institutions tend to redefine the meaning of political interaction. Visits by candidates for local leadership positions, requests for support, and efforts to mobilise students are not directly framed as political transactions, but are situated within the context of social ties, prayer, religious counsel, and the common good of the community. This strategy is employed to maintain good relations with political actors whilst limiting the institution's involvement in practical politics (Muchlinarwati, M., & Abdurrahman, 2025). This pattern was evident in the experience of INF-01, a boarding school caretaker, when dealing with a visit from a candidate for regional head. The informant explained: "If the regent or a candidate for regent comes here, we must not refuse them. The boarding school's doors are open to anyone. But right from the start we make it clear: 'Have you come here to seek the kiai's blessings and prayers, or to ask for a share of the students'

support?' When we frame the discussion within the context of prayers for safety and advice on promoting virtue, the focus of the conversation shifts from calculations over vote-buying to the moral obligations of leadership. This is how we educate future leaders; we do not allow ourselves to be led by them."(Wawancara dengan INF-01, Oktober 2025).

The data shows that acceptance of a political actor does not automatically imply acceptance of the political interests they represent. Pesantren administrators impose restrictions through moral and religious discourse. In this context, interactions that might externally be interpreted as political relationships are constructed by internal actors as socio-religious relationships with specific boundaries. A similar pattern was found in INF-06, who rejected the idea of mobilising former students for the interests of a particular party. According to informants, the relationship between the kiai and the santri is more accurately understood as an academic relationship rather than one of electoral patronage. Meanwhile, INF-05 emphasised the importance of public literacy for female santri so that they are not merely treated as instruments of political mobilisation. Thus, adaptation strategies are not only implemented through the attitudes of pesantren leaders but also through efforts to maintain the political agency of the pesantren community.

Table 1.
Patterns of Practical Reasoning and Symbolic Accountability in Responding to Local Politics

Informant	External Political Pressure	Reporting/Accountability Practices	Functions of the Social Order Achieved
INF-01 (Kiai)	Request for an official declaration of support in the local elections	The candidates' visit was presented as a social gathering, a time for prayer and a forum for advice	Preserving the moral integrity of Islamic boarding schools and preventing political polarisation
INF-06 (Public Relations)	A call for the mobilisation of former Islamic boarding school students in support of a particular political party	The relationship between a kiai and a santri is defined as a chain of scholarly transmission, not a relationship of political patronage	Maintaining the political agency of santri and preventing internal divisions
INF-05 (Nyai)	Candidates' approaches to female students for electoral purposes	Female students are equipped with public literacy skills and an understanding of their rights as citizens	Strengthening women's political autonomy and preventing the instrumentalisation of santri
General pattern	Pressure to secure legitimacy and electoral support	Reframing through the language of social bonds, the common good, prayer and moral responsibility	Maintaining institutional autonomy without severing social ties with political actors

Source: compiled from interview findings and research observations.

Based on the data as a whole, there are three main patterns in this practice of moral neutralisation. Firstly, the desacralisation of efforts to prevent polarisation and politicisation, namely transforming political motives for power into socio-religious interactions through the concept of silaturahmi. Secondly, refraining from instructing support for any particular political group so that social relations within the pesantren community remain intact. Thirdly, the defence of institutional integrity, which involves positioning the pesantren as a moral space capable of offering advice to political actors, rather than as a subordinate to local political authority.

The findings above demonstrate that the adaptation of Islamic educational institutions to local politics cannot be explained solely through the categories of resistance or compliance. Both categories are too simplistic to account for the actions of actors who simultaneously accept the presence of political actors, maintain communication with them, yet limit the political

consequences of such relationships. The practices observed are better understood as a negotiation of meaning within a social interaction. From the perspective of Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, social order does not exist as a structure entirely external to the actors, but is produced through the everyday practices of members of the community (Theresiana Milannisia, 2017). Aktor menggunakan pengetahuan akal sehat (*common-sense knowledge*) untuk menjelaskan apa yang sedang mereka lakukan dan mengapa tindakan tersebut dianggap wajar dalam konteks tertentu. Hal tersebut relevan dengan temuan penelitian ini karena pimpinan pesantren tidak semata-mata "menolak politik", melainkan mengubah cara politik tersebut didefinisikan dalam ruang kelembagaan (Ferly Tanggu Hana, 2022).

When a regional head candidate's visit is referred to as a 'silaturahmi', for example, the term is not merely a linguistic choice. It functions as an indexical mechanism that imbues a particular action with specific meaning based on the social context in which it takes place. For the candidate, a visit to a pesantren may have electoral significance. However, for the pesantren's management, the same visit is framed as an opportunity to receive guests, offer advice, and pray for the welfare of the community. This difference in meaning demonstrates that a single social action can hold different meanings for the actors involved (Ghofur, 2018). This research does indeed show that managers use such contextual meanings to limit the political consequences of interactions.

Thus, the neutralisation of the indexical moral dimension does not mean that politics has completely disappeared from the pesantren. On the contrary, politics remains present, but its meaning is negotiated and situated within normative boundaries deemed acceptable by the pesantren community. This is where the critical aspect of the research findings lies. Reframing politics as social bonding can function as a mechanism for institutional protection, but at the same time demonstrates that pesantren remain situated within the field of power relations. In other words, pesantren are not outside politics, but rather manage their proximity to politics through the production of boundaries of meaning.

This practice can be understood as a form of institutional boundary work, namely the efforts of actors to determine what is still acceptable as a socio-religious relationship and what is considered to have entered the realm of practical politics. Requests for visits, prayers and advice are still acceptable as they can be construed as part of the pesantren's socio-religious function. Conversely, requests for declarations of support or the mobilisation of students are seen as crossing the line, as they have the potential to turn the pesantren into an electoral instrument. (Annurria & Mais, 2022). The INF-01 data explicitly illustrates this distinction when informants differentiate between 'asking for a blessing through prayer' and 'asking for a student's allowance".

From the perspective of accounting practices, these actions also demonstrate that the managers of Islamic boarding schools continually provide explanations regarding the reasonableness of their actions. They do not merely act, but also explain to the community why such actions are morally acceptable (Mariyono, 2025). Concepts such as social bonding, the common good, advice and the chain of transmission of knowledge serve as tools to ensure that institutional actions are understood as consistent with the identity of the pesantren. Thus, accountability in this context is not merely a matter of administrative reporting, but also involves moral and symbolic responsibility towards the community. This concept is in line with the research design, which places accounting practices, indexicality and reflexivity at the centre of the analysis (Ana Sopanah, Adya Hermawati2 & Riski Nur Utami, 2024).

The findings of INF-06 further reinforce this argument. The assertion that the relationship between the kiai and the santri constitutes a 'chain of knowledge, not a voting bloc' reveals an effort to separate religious authority from electoral mobilisation. In this context, the kiai-santri relationship is not rejected, but redefined. The kiai's authority is maintained as educational and scholarly authority, whilst the santri's political decisions are situated within the realm of individual agency. This practice simultaneously serves as a preventive mechanism to ensure that the pesantren's symbolic capital is not automatically converted into electoral capital.

The gender dimension also emerges as a significant factor through the INF-05 experience. Efforts to equip female santri with public literacy demonstrate that the management of political relations is not only concerned with institutional independence, but also with who possesses the capacity to determine their own political choices. From this perspective, women are not positioned as objects of electoral mobilisation, but rather as subjects who possess the rights and capacity to understand civic life. These findings broaden the interpretation of pesantren's political adaptation, as they demonstrate that the protection of institutional autonomy is intertwined with the protection of community members' agency.

However, this strategy also entails institutional ambivalence. On the one hand, the use of moral language such as 'silaturahmi' and 'kemaslahatan' enables pesantren to maintain social ties with the government and candidates without having to offer formal political support. On the other hand, the closeness that is continually maintained leaves open the possibility that the pesantren's religious symbols, legitimacy and authority may be exploited by political actors to build an image of legitimacy. Therefore, moral neutralisation cannot be understood as the elimination of power relations, but rather as a strategy for managing power relations through the regulation of meaning and the boundaries of involvement. At this point, the research contributes to the study of pesantren and local politics. The literature reviewed in previous research has largely examined pesantren from the perspectives of patronage, symbolic capital, and electoral contestation. Whereas this study demonstrates that pesantren actors possess the agency to interpret, limit and regulate such interactions in their daily practices. Thus, Islamic educational institutions should not be understood merely as objects subjected to political pressure, but as institutional actors that produce internal mechanisms to maintain their autonomy.

From an ethnomethodological perspective, this process demonstrates that institutional autonomy is a practical accomplishment, rather than a condition automatically possessed by pesantren (Dharma, 2018). Autonomy must continually be forged through dialogue, decision-making, moral justification and the restriction of actions. Therefore, when a pesantren welcomes visits from candidates but refuses to mobilise its students, this does not constitute a contradiction (Susilo, 2017). Both are part of the same mechanism: accepting social relations, whilst limiting their transformation into political control.

Consequently, these findings lead to the proposition that the stronger the capacity of Islamic educational institutions to produce moral explanations and define the boundaries of meaning regarding political interaction, the greater the scope available for these institutions to maintain their institutional autonomy without having to sever social ties with local authorities. Political adaptation in this context is not merely a compromise, but an active process of producing social order through language, norms and everyday practices. Based on this analysis, the neutralisation of indexical morality can be understood as an adaptation strategy that operates through three mechanisms: (1) the redefinition of the meaning of political interaction as social bonding and the common good; (2) the restriction of the conversion of religious authority into electoral support; and (3) the preservation of the agency of pesantren community members in determining their political stances. These three mechanisms demonstrate that the accountability of Islamic educational institutions operates not only through formal-administrative mechanisms but also through symbolic and moral accountability to their communities. This finding further reinforces the argument that institutional resilience is the result of practical reasoning that is continually produced in everyday life

Curricular Pragmatism in Islamic Education: Negotiating State Regulation and Academic Autonomy

Research in this discussion shows that state regulatory pressure on Islamic educational institutions does not result in a response that is entirely resistant or one of total compliance. Instead, the administrators of madrasahs and pesantren have developed pragmatic curricular strategies by distinguishing between the formal sphere—which deals directly with the state's administrative demands—and the internal pedagogical sphere, which is used to preserve Islamic scholarly traditions. These strategies are particularly evident in the management of the

curriculum, teaching materials, assessment, accreditation, and the continued study of classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning) (Sibromalisi, Nur Cholid, 2025).

Research data indicates that the administrators of Islamic educational institutions do not view state regulations solely as a threat to educational autonomy. Rather, regulations are seen as requirements that must be met in order to maintain legal standing, accreditation, access to educational resources, and the continuity of institutional relations with the government (Zuhdi et al., 2019). At the same time, compliance with these regulations does not mean that the entire epistemological structure of Islamic education must be standardised to meet state standards. This is evident from the practices carried out by INF-02 and INF-03. In formal learning settings, the institutions adhere to the requirements of the national curriculum and prepare the necessary administrative documentation for monitoring purposes. However, within the non-formal educational sphere of the pesantren, the traditions of sorogan, bandongan and the study of classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning) are maintained as an integral part of religious education. Consequently, there is a division of functions between the sphere of administrative compliance and the sphere of epistemological preservation.

Table 2.
Curricular Pragmatism in the Negotiation of Islamic Education with State Regulations

Dimensions	National Regulatory Requirements	Response from Islamic Education Administrators	Strategic Significance
Formal curriculum	Achievement of learning outcomes and the Merdeka Curriculum framework	Developing teaching materials and learning administration resources in accordance with standards	Maintaining institutional legality and accountability
Administration and assessment	Compliance with the documents and indicators assessed during supervision/accreditation	Systematically preparing documents for audit purposes	Ensuring the institution's acceptance within the national education system
Scientific epistemology	Standardisation of competences and learning outcomes	Maintaining sorogan, bandongan and the study of classical Islamic texts in the dormitory	Preserving the continuity of the Islamic scholarly tradition
Moderation and nationalism	The integration of national values and character-building programmes	Placing national values in the context of Islamic values such as hubbul wathan	Linking Islamic identity with citizenship
State–institution relations	Compliance with standards and oversight mechanisms	Administrative compliance accompanied by the organisation of internal pedagogical spaces	Striking a balance between state accountability and academic autonomy

Source: compiled from interview findings and research observations.

This approach was explained in more concrete terms by INF-03, the head of the madrasah, who stated: "On paper, we follow the Ministry's entire assessment framework. Inspectors come to check the administrative files and syllabuses; everything is in order and meets national quality standards. However, the essence of our character education lies in the time after Asr and Fajr prayers. That is when we read Fathul Qarib and Ihya Ulumuddin. The state needs accreditation figures; the community needs manners and morals. We fulfil both without having to pit one against the other." (Interview with INF-03, November 2025).

This statement reveals the existence of two concurrent orientations. Firstly, the orientation towards formal accountability, namely compliance with administrative standards that can be verified by the state. Secondly, the orientation towards pedagogical-cultural accountability, namely upholding the process of character-building and the transmission of Islamic knowledge, which cannot be fully represented through administrative indicators. The findings of this study indicate that such curricular adaptation takes place through three patterns. Firstly, administrative compliance within the formal sphere to maintain institutional legitimacy. Secondly, the preservation of epistemic traditions outside formal structures through the study of religious texts and learning patterns characteristic of Islamic boarding schools. Thirdly, the convergence of national and religious values through a process of contextualisation, so that the values of moderation and nationalism are not positioned as being in conflict with the institution's Islamic identity.

This discussion demonstrates that the relationship between state regulation and Islamic education does not follow a simple pattern of state domination over educational institutions. Rather, the administrators of Islamic educational institutions engage in a process of negotiation that allows formal regulation to be accepted on the one hand, whilst academic autonomy is maintained on the other. Thus, curricular pragmatism in this study is not merely an act of 'adapting' to government policy, but rather an institutional strategy for managing two distinct systems of legitimacy

The first system is the state's administrative legitimacy, which operates through the curriculum, assessment, accreditation, learning materials and oversight mechanisms. The second system is the epistemological legitimacy of Islamic education, which is built upon scholarly traditions, sanad, classical Islamic texts, adab and character-building. The research shows that administrators do not seek to eliminate either of these systems. Rather, both are assigned distinct roles and functions.

From an ethnomethodological perspective, this situation is interesting because it demonstrates that institutional order is produced through everyday practices, rather than being determined solely by formal regulations. State regulations do indeed provide a normative framework, but their meaning and implementation are redefined by the actors within the context of institutional life. This is consistent with a research framework that views social order as a 'practical accomplishment'—that is, something that is continuously produced by members of the community through practical actions and reasoning.

In this context, the decision to comply with the state's curriculum and administrative requirements cannot be automatically categorised as a form of subordination. Rather, such actions can be understood as the use of administrative instruments to safeguard the institution's existence. The administration thus becomes a kind of 'formal language' that enables Islamic educational institutions to communicate with the state bureaucracy (Septio, 2025). By complying with this language, the institution gains the legal scope to maintain a broader range of educational practices within its internal environment. It is here that a form of selective pragmatism is evident. The institution does not accept the entire regulatory framework in its entirety, but adopts those elements deemed necessary for its continued existence. The curriculum, assessment and administrative frameworks are adhered to because they have direct implications for the institution's legal status and recognition. Meanwhile, the scholarly traditions that form the identity of Islamic education are maintained through pedagogical spaces that remain under the institution's internal control (Sibromalisi, Nur Cholid, 2025). This practice can be described as pedagogical compartmentalisation, namely the separation of educational functions based on space, time and institutional interests. Formal learning is used to meet the standards of the national education system, whilst boarding facilities and time set aside for religious instruction are used to preserve the epistemological traditions of the pesantren (Rahman et al., 2026). The research findings explicitly demonstrate the existence of such spatial and temporal segmentation.

However, this compartmentalisation should not be understood as an absolute separation. On the contrary, there is a process of curricular hybridisation. The values of nationalism and moderation, for example, are not merely superimposed onto the religious

curriculum, but are interpreted through concepts already familiar within the Islamic tradition. According to the research data, the value of hubbul wathan is used as a bridge to link national education with Islamic education. This strategy enables institutions to adopt a nationalist orientation without having to compromise their religious identity (Efendi & April, 2022). From a critical perspective, this practice demonstrates that educational standards are never entirely neutral with regard to issues of power. When the quality of education is represented through documents, indicators, assessments and accreditation, there is a tendency for those aspects of education that are easily measured to be given greater weight than the cultural, moral and spiritual dimensions of education (Cahyadi, 2026). INF-03's statement on the distinction between "accreditation figures" and "ethics and morals" clearly illustrates this tension.

Thus, the issue facing Islamic education is not merely whether institutions accept or reject the state curriculum. The more fundamental issue is who has the authority to determine what constitutes quality education. The state tends to define quality through standards that can be administered and audited, whilst Islamic educational institutions also take into account the dimensions of etiquette, scholarly tradition, teacher-student relationships, and the continuity of the transmission of religious knowledge. Research findings indicate that administrators strive to ensure that the definition of quality is not entirely reduced to administrative compliance. From an ethnomethodological perspective, these actions constitute a form of institutional reflexivity. School administrators understand the situations they face, identify external demands, and then devise practical procedures to make those situations manageable. They do not rely on abstract theories regarding the relationship between the state and education to make decisions, but rather draw on experience, local knowledge, and an understanding of the rules to determine the course of action deemed most acceptable. The concept of indexicality is important because the meanings of 'compliance', 'autonomy' and 'quality' depend on the social context in which these terms are used. This also demonstrates that the autonomy of Islamic education does not mean freedom from state regulation. Autonomy is best understood as an institution's ability to determine how regulations are translated into internal practice. In other words, autonomy lies in the realm of interpretation and implementation. Institutions remain part of the national education system, but have the scope to regulate how their academic identity and traditions are maintained within that system.

These findings also enrich previous research that has described the relationship between pesantren and the national curriculum, particularly from the perspective of resistance. In this paper, earlier research indicated the existence of symbolic resistance to the dominance of the national curriculum through the modification of teaching materials to ensure they remained consistent with the theological integrity of the pesantren. The findings of the present study reveal a more complex form of response: not open resistance, but rather negotiation and functional hybridisation. Thus, Islamic education administrators are not entirely in a position of 'opposing the state', nor are they entirely passive implementers of state policy. They occupy a mediating position, translating external policies into the internal needs of the institution. It is this role as mediator that makes curricular practice a crucial arena for the negotiation of power. Furthermore, this finding has implications for the concept of sustainable Islamic education. The sustainability of education is determined not only by an institution's ability to meet formal standards, but also by its ability to maintain the pedagogical identity that constitutes the very reason for its existence. If regulations place too much emphasis on administrative homogenisation, there is a risk that the epistemological diversity of Islamic education will become increasingly marginalised. Conversely, if institutions completely shut themselves off from state regulation, their legal and administrative sustainability may also be compromised. Therefore, the research findings indicate a need to view the relationship between regulation and Islamic education within a framework of negotiation, rather than as a dichotomy of compliance versus resistance. The strategies employed by school administrators represent an effort to maintain a balance between accountability to the state and pedagogical responsibility to the community.

Ultimately, the curricular pragmatism identified in this study demonstrates that Islamic education possesses the adaptive capacity to cope with changes in the institutional environment

without having to lose its entire epistemological identity. Adaptation is achieved through the division of spaces, the selective adoption of regulatory requirements, the translation of national values into religious language, and the preservation of scholarly traditions within the institution. Thus, adaptation is not the erasure of identity, but a process of reconstructing educational governance so that the institution's identity and sustainability can coexist. Based on the research findings and the discussion above, it can be affirmed that curricular pragmatism in Islamic education constitutes a mechanism for negotiating between the state's demands for standardisation and the need to maintain the institution's academic autonomy. This negotiation takes place through three main mechanisms: (1) administrative compliance as a strategy to maintain institutional legitimacy and access; (2) the compartmentalisation of the pedagogical sphere to preserve Islamic scholarly traditions; and (3) the hybridisation of national and Islamic values in teaching practices. Thus, the findings of this study demonstrate that Islamic education does not merely adapt to state regulations, but actively interprets and re-frames these regulations so that they can coexist with the institutions' epistemological autonomy. From an ethnomethodological perspective, this ability constitutes a form of practical accomplishment: educational order is continuously produced through the decisions, discourses and everyday practices of the institution's administrators.

The Economic Resilience of Islamic Education: The Santripreneur Ecosystem and Institutional Autonomy

This study demonstrates that economic autonomy is one of the key strategies employed by Islamic educational institutions to reduce their dependence on local political intervention. Reliance on local government aid and political support can limit an institution's ability to determine its own policies independently (Nurfazri et al., 2024). Consequently, the institution's management has developed various internal economic activities as alternative sources of funding. This strategy is implemented through cooperatives, agribusiness, livestock farming, service units, digital printing, and the utilisation of productive waqf.

Research data indicates that these business units are not only aimed at generating profit but are also utilised to support educational needs. Income from these ventures is used to assist with operational costs, meet the needs of students, develop educational facilities, and provide support to students from underprivileged families. Consequently, economic activities are positioned as part of the strategy for the sustainability of Islamic education. These findings are presented in the table below.

Table 3:
The Economic Ecosystem of Islamic Education and Institutional Autonomy

Economic Activities	Forms of Management	Benefits for Islamic Education	Impact on Self-Reliance
Pesantren co-operative	Shop selling essentials for boarding school students and the local community	To help cover the costs of electricity, water and teaching staff salaries	Reducing dependence on political support
Agribusiness and livestock farming	The use of productive waqf land	Meeting some of the boarding school's food needs	Reducing operating costs
Service and digital printing unit	Garment manufacturing, screen printing and digital design	The surplus is used for educational facilities	Strengthening internal sources of revenue
Drinking water and production businesses	Production for internal and community needs	Increasing the organisation's income	Expanding the diversification of funding sources
Productive waqf	Productive management of waqf assets	Supporting education and assistance for underprivileged students at Islamic boarding schools	Strengthening institutional sustainability

Source: compiled from research findings.

The data indicates that economic activities serve a broader purpose than merely generating income. Economic activities act as a pillar of funding for education. According to the research data, pesantren cooperatives are even reported to cover around 40 per cent of certain operational costs, such as electricity, water and teaching staff salaries. Meanwhile, agribusiness and livestock farming help meet food requirements and reduce the institution's consumption costs. This shift is clearly evident from the experience of INF-07 as a cooperative manager and 'santripreneur'. An informant explained: "In the past, whenever there were renovations to the boarding house, we would rely on proposals for social assistance from the council or the regent. As a result, in the run-up to elections, we would be approached by campaign teams and asked to collect the identity cards of teachers and students. Our kiai eventually decided: this is unhealthy; it demeans the dignity of da'wah. Ten years ago, we set up a bottled water business, a maize farm and a student-run mini-market. Now, thanks to the surplus from these ventures, we no longer have to worry about begging for funds from politicians' discretionary budgets. We stand on our own two feet, and it is actually the local officials who are now reluctant to interfere with us." (Interview with INF-07, January 2026).

This statement highlights a shift from financial dependence towards economic self-reliance. Previously, the organisation's development needs were largely met through external aid proposals. Following the development of business units, the organisation now has internal funding sources that can be used to meet some of its own needs. Other findings indicate that economic activities also serve a social function. The utilisation of productive waqf and business development is used to assist underprivileged students and expand access to education. Thus, economic surpluses are not only channelled back into the organisation's interests but are also used to strengthen the social function of Islamic education.

The discussion of the research findings indicates that economic issues are an inseparable part of the issue of autonomy in Islamic education. An institution will find it easier to uphold its institutional decisions if it has sufficient resources to fund educational activities. Conversely, a high degree of dependence on external funding sources can open the door to the influence of the interests of those providing such support. In the context of this study, political support is understood not only as a source of funding but also as a relationship that can influence an institution's position. When such support becomes the primary source of funding, the institution finds itself in a situation where it is more vulnerable to the demands or interests of the donors. Consequently, the development of internal initiatives is a means for institutional managers to reduce dependence whilst simultaneously expanding the scope for independent decision-making.

The ethnomethodological perspective helps to explain that these decisions stem from the practical experiences of the administrators. They do not merely view economic issues as matters of income, but link them to their experiences of political interaction. The experience of receiving aid, the emergence of political demands, and the need to ensure the institution's sustainability subsequently form the basis for the administrators to develop internal economic alternatives.

Thus, the development of 'santripreneurs' is a form of practical reasoning. The administrators assess the conditions they face, recognise the risks of dependency, and then develop the approach they deem most viable for ensuring the sustainability of education. From this perspective, the economy forms part of institutional practice produced by actors through their day-to-day experiences. What is interesting is that economic self-reliance does not mean that the institution severs ties with the government or political actors. The institution can still maintain relations and cooperate with external parties. The difference lies in the degree of dependence. When an institution possesses more diverse internal resources, relations with external parties are no longer the sole determinant of the institution's sustainability.

Therefore, economic resilience in this study is best understood as the ability to manage interdependence, rather than as a state of complete independence. Institutions remain within an interconnected social, economic and political environment, but possess the capacity to define the boundaries of those relationships.

The development of cooperatives and business units also highlights the link between education and the economy. Santri are not merely beneficiaries of education, but can also be involved in production, entrepreneurship, design, garment manufacturing and services. In this context, 'santripreneurs' provide a space where educational and economic functions converge. This relationship forms a cycle: education, skills, business activities, income, and the strengthening of education.

This cycle is significant as it demonstrates that economic activities are not situated outside the education system. On the contrary, economic activities form part of the institutional ecosystem that supports the sustainability of Islamic education. However, these findings must be interpreted critically. Economic self-reliance does not automatically guarantee educational autonomy. The development of business units still requires sound governance to ensure that economic considerations do not overshadow the institution's primary purpose as an educational body. Therefore, indicators of success are not merely the level of income, but also how. These revenues are used for educational and community purposes.

In this study, economic activities are considered legitimate because the surplus is channelled back into educational needs, institutional facilities and community groups in need. Thus, the economy is positioned as an instrument of education, rather than as the institution's ultimate goal. From a governance perspective, this situation indicates that the material base forms part of the institution's strength. Educational autonomy cannot be built solely through values, leadership and the curriculum; it also requires the capacity to provide the resources necessary to implement those decisions. As internal resources grow stronger, the institution has greater scope to determine its own educational priorities.

These findings also show that economic self-reliance has implications for the relationship between institutions and local politics. When institutions are no longer heavily reliant on external aid, the pressure to align with the interests of donors may diminish. In the case of INF-07, the development of internal enterprises was even seen as a means of preserving the institution's dignity and reducing the scope for political intervention. Thus, the economy within Islamic education has an important political dimension. Co-operative activities, agribusiness, productive waqf and santripreneurship are not merely economic activities, but can also serve as mechanisms for safeguarding the institution's decision-making autonomy. This is where the link between economic resilience and institutional autonomy lies. Whilst in the first finding institutions addressed politics through the negotiation of meaning, and in the second finding they addressed regulation through the negotiation of the curriculum, in the third finding they addressed political dependence through the negotiation of resources. These three mechanisms demonstrate a pattern of adaptation that is mutually reinforcing.

Thus, Islamic education in this study does not appear as an institution that merelys pressure from the local political environment. On the contrary, the institution has established a number of internal mechanisms to manage such pressure. Moral discourse is used to regulate political relations, curricular strategies are employed to manage regulations, whilst economic autonomy is utilised to reduce dependence on external resources. Based on the research findings and the discussion, it can be concluded that the economic resilience of Islamic education is a process of transforming resource autonomy into institutional autonomy. The development of santripreneurs, cooperatives, agribusinesses, service units and productive waqf not only generates income but also supports educational operations, strengthens learning facilities, empowers santri and expands access to education for the underprivileged.

DISCUSSION

Negotiations on Institutional Autonomy: Novelty and the Position of the Findings within Islamic Education Research

This study demonstrates that the relationship between Islamic educational institutions and local politics does not operate simply in terms of compliance, resistance, or co-optation. The administrators of pesantren and madrasahs engage in various negotiation practices to maintain institutional sustainability and autonomy. The findings reveal three main mechanisms: moral neutralization in dealing with political interactions, curricular pragmatism in responding to

state regulations, and economic resilience in reducing dependence on external resources. These three mechanisms demonstrate that actors within Islamic educational institutions actively interpret situations, provide justifications for their actions, and establish boundaries in their relationships with the political, administrative, and economic environment. Thus, the findings not only explain the forms of institutional adaptation but also demonstrate how institutional order is produced through everyday practices.

The novelty of this research lies in the shift in the unit of analysis from political actors, religious elites and electoral mobilisation towards the day-to-day practices of the administrators of Islamic educational institutions. Previous research has largely focused on how kiai, santri, pesantren and political actors build relationships within electoral contests. This study goes a step further by examining how the administrators of these institutions give meaning to these interactions, how they establish accountability for their actions, and how day-to-day decisions are used to maintain institutional autonomy. The ethnomethodological perspective enables this study to view autonomy not as a pre-existing condition, but as a practical accomplishment that is continually produced through conversation, decision-making, moral justification and the restriction of actions.

Local Religious and Political Authority: A Comparison of Findings with Previous Research

The findings of this study are consistent with a number of previous studies that highlight the strong position of pesantren and kiai in local political life. Mahali, Sobari and Tawakkal demonstrate that the relationship between kiai and santri in electoral politics can be understood through a patron-client dynamic, particularly as kiai wield strong authority within pesantren culture. The finding regarding the strength of this authority is relevant to this study because kiai remain key actors in determining how the institution's relationship with political actors is managed. However, this study found that the kiai's authority is not always directed towards mobilising political support. This authority is also used to set limits on electoral interests, for example by accepting visits from candidates but refusing requests to mobilise santri.

The findings of this study are also linked to research on the political culture of Islamic boarding schools, which indicates that these communities are not homogeneous. Research on the API and Pabelan boarding schools in Magelang, for example, reveals differences between patterns of obedience and patronage and more open and rational political patterns. Research on the 2024 Cirebon City Regional Elections also reveals the existence of patron-client relationships between candidates, religious leaders (kiai), and the community in pesantren areas through personal connections, loyalty, and the exchange of interests. Meanwhile, research on santri communities in Jombang and Mojokerto indicates that the political responses of pesantren communities are dynamic and contextual, and are not determined solely by charisma or religious lineage. These findings are consistent with this study's conclusion that the pesantren's response to politics cannot be generalised as a single, uniform pattern. These similarities may arise because pesantren possess a social character that facilitates the formation of close ties between religious authorities, the santri community, the wider community, and political actors. However, this study highlights an aspect that has not been a primary focus of previous research, namely the internal mechanisms used by these institutions to manage these relationships. When a candidate visits a pesantren, for example, the management does not simply accept or reject the candidate's presence, but reframes the visit by situating it within the context of socialising, prayer and advice. Conversely, requests for declarations of support or the mobilisation of santri can be considered to have overstepped the boundaries of the pesantren's socio-religious functions. Thus, the differences in findings relate primarily to the unit of analysis and the methodological perspective employed.

Institutional Pragmatism: Differences in Findings and Contextual Factors

The distinction between this study and some previous research is also evident in the way Islamic educational institutions respond to state regulations. A number of studies on pesantren education have focused primarily on issues of standardisation, accreditation, legal recognition, and the tension between the national curriculum and the pesantren's scholarly traditions. This study found that the institutions' administrators do not choose between

accepting or rejecting the regulations in their entirety. Instead, they engage in negotiation and a division of functions. Administrative procedures, assessments and the formal curriculum are carried out to ensure legal compliance and accountability, whilst sorogan, bandongan, the study of classical Islamic texts and character-building are maintained within the internal pedagogical framework.

These differences may be influenced by the institutional context and the focus of the research. Studies employing a policy or standardisation perspective tend to examine the relationship between the state and pesantren from a regulatory standpoint, whereas this study adopts an ethnomethodological perspective to examine how regulations are interpreted by actors in their day-to-day practices. Consequently, compliance with state administration in this study is not directly interpreted as the institution's subordination to the state. Administration is, in fact, utilised as a formal language to maintain legality and institutional autonomy, whilst epistemological traditions are preserved through pedagogical spaces that remain under the institution's internal control. Thus, the research findings suggest that the relationship between the state and Islamic education is more accurately understood as a process of negotiation rather than a one-way relationship of domination.

From an economic perspective, the research findings also indicate a broadening of the concept of pesantren self-reliance. Previous research on 'santripreneurs' has largely viewed economic activities as a means of enhancing the self-reliance of pesantrens and the wider community. This study demonstrates that economic self-reliance also has institutional and political dimensions. Cooperatives, agribusiness, service units, digital printing and productive waqf not only generate income but also reduce dependence on external aid, which can open the door to political intervention. Consequently, differences in findings may be influenced by how pesantren economic activities are viewed: not merely as economic activities, but as part of a strategy to maintain institutional autonomy**.**

Accountability and Autonomy in Islamic Education: A Contribution to Scholarly Discourse

The findings of this research contribute to the study of Islamic education by demonstrating that institutional autonomy is the result of an ongoing process of negotiation carried out by institutional actors. Autonomy does not mean that pesantren must sever ties with the government or political actors. Rather, autonomy lies in the institution's ability to determine how such relationships are managed, to what extent external interests may be accommodated, and how those interests are translated into internal practices. When a pesantren accepts visits from candidates but refuses to mobilise its students, for example, such actions demonstrate that acceptance of social relationships does not necessarily imply acceptance of electoral interests. Theoretically, this study expands the application of Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodological perspective within the field of Islamic education studies.

The concepts of accounting practices, indexicality and reflexivity are used to explain how actors justify their actions, how the meaning of an action depends on context, and how such actions simultaneously maintain institutional order. In the context of this research, terms such as silaturahmi, kemaslahatan, nasihat and sanad ilmu do not merely function as religious terms, but serve as tools for explaining and justifying institutional actions to the community. Thus, accountability in Islamic education is not merely administrative in nature, but also moral and symbolic. Another contribution lies in linking three spheres that have often been treated separately in previous research, namely politics, education and the economy. This study demonstrates that all three are interrelated in the formation of institutional autonomy. In the political sphere, institutions negotiate meaning; in the educational sphere, they negotiate the curriculum; whilst in the economic sphere, they negotiate resources. These three mechanisms form complementary adaptation strategies. Thus, the sustainability of Islamic educational institutions is determined not only by their ability to withstand political pressure, but also by their ability to manage regulations and build an internal resource base.

Institutional Resilience in Islamic Education: Implications and Directions for Development

This research has practical implications for the administrators of pesantren and madrasahs in establishing sustainable educational governance. Institutions need to maintain open social relations with the government and political actors, whilst still drawing clear

boundaries between socio-religious relations and practical political interests. Strengthening public literacy and citizenship among santri is also important so that members of the pesantren community have the capacity to determine their own political stances and are not treated merely as instruments of mobilisation. Findings regarding female santri indicate that the protection of institutional autonomy is also linked to the protection of community members' agency.

For the government, this research suggests that relationships with pesantren and madrasahs need to be built through transparent and accountable mechanisms for guidance, funding and cooperation. Government support should not create a dependency that could limit the institutions' scope for decision-making. At the same time, Islamic educational institutions need to strengthen their internal resources through cooperatives, agribusiness, service units, digital printing and productive waqf. The research findings indicate that diversifying funding sources can increase these institutions' scope to set educational priorities and reduce their reliance on external aid.

From an academic perspective, this study opens the way for further research to examine whether the negotiation patterns identified also occur in pesantren with different characteristics, such as Salafi pesantren, modern pesantren, foundation-based madrasahs, or Islamic educational institutions with varying levels of economic dependence. Future research could also compare these negotiation patterns across regions with different local political configurations. Further study is required to determine how changes in political leadership, shifts in education policy, developments in the digital economy, and changes in funding sources affect the ability of Islamic educational institutions to maintain their autonomy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be affirmed that the adaptation of Islamic educational institutions to local political dynamics is a process of negotiation that takes place actively through day-to-day institutional practices. Pesantren and madrasahs do not merely find themselves in a position of either accepting or rejecting external pressures, but rather develop practical ways to ensure the continuity of education whilst maintaining institutional autonomy. From an ethnomethodological perspective, this process demonstrates that the order and autonomy of institutions are shaped through practical reasoning, the attribution of meaning, and the actions of actors in dealing with concrete situations.

Firstly, in terms of their relationship with local politics, Islamic educational institutions practise moral neutrality through the negotiation of meaning. Interactions with political actors are not directly viewed as electoral relationships, but are framed in terms of social ties, prayer, advice and the common good. This strategy enables the institutions to maintain social ties with local authorities without turning the pesantren into instruments of political mobilisation. Autonomy in this context is realised through the ability to draw a line between socio-religious relations and practical political interests.

Secondly, in the dimension of educational governance, the institutions develop curricular pragmatism by reconciling the demands of state regulation with Islamic scholarly autonomy. Compliance with administrative requirements, assessment, accreditation and curriculum standards is used to maintain the institution's legal standing and accountability, whilst Islamic scholarly traditions are preserved through internal pedagogical spaces. Thirdly, in the dimension of resources, economic resilience through cooperatives, productive waqf, agribusiness, service units and 'santripreneurs' serves as a pillar of educational sustainability whilst reducing dependence on external funding sources. Thus, these three strategies form a unified whole: moral neutrality manages political relations, curricular pragmatism manages regulation, and economic resilience manages resource dependence.

The novelty of this research lies in its understanding of the adaptation of Islamic educational institutions as a three-tiered strategy moral, pedagogical and material which collectively builds and maintains institutional autonomy amidst local political dynamics. This study demonstrates that Islamic educational institutions are not merely objects subjected to political pressure, but rather active agents that produce internal mechanisms through the

negotiation of meaning, the organisation of pedagogical spaces, and the strengthening of economic self-reliance. In particular, 'santripreneurs', cooperatives, productive waqfs and internal business units not only function as instruments of economic empowerment but also serve as the material infrastructure for the independence of Islamic education. These findings expand our understanding that the sustainability of Islamic education is determined not only by the capacity to adapt politically and pedagogically but also by the ability to build a material foundation that underpins institutional autonomy.

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